Another

244 789 [824] fertility medicine consists of the following mixture: 1) bark of the Simarubacea Irvingia barteri Hook. f. (andŏ́k; 2) bark bark of the Anacardiacea Pseudospondias microcarpa (Rich.) Engl. (ofŏ́s); 3) elephant manure; 4) sand from the Campo or the Uelle; 5) salt. On the eve of sowing this mixture is added to the nuts. This, too, must be understood as a direct transfer of power: the groundnuts are to be as numerous as the fruits of the two plants named; they are to become as enormous as the pile of elephant manure; as numerous as sand in the Campo -- we would say, as the sands of the ocean; and as innumerable as the grains [834] of salt. Finally, certain Liliaceae (ayăn) are planted between the groundnuts so that their leaves may become as green as the lilies in the field. As can be seen, there is no lack of friendly encouragement and good examples.

244 The fruit, illustrated in cross-section by Plate 6, Drawings a and b, usually has two seeds, more rarely three, and still more rarely one. Something reminiscent of our love feast occurs when a boy at work finds a fruit with three seeds in his mother's [195] basket or in the field, calls his friends, and shares the seeds with them. This is called euphemistically: bi kĭ kăbăd, "we dissect a goat." Thus, we have here the doctrine: Do not forget to do good and to share with your fellow man when you are living in abundance! It is probably more by way of a game that the Pangwe, [858] especially the children, sometimes eat the nuts raw. Otherwise raw nuts are prepared principally for soup or compote. It is also customary to boil the whole fruit and then eat the seeds. The [867] nuts are stored in large, tall baskets of raffia pith, which are hung under the roof or placed on a bed, or the nuts may be placed loose on the groundnut loft, akăn owĭnŏ.

433 435 244 As a result of their laziness and indifference, the Pangwe seldom have enough groundnuts, so there is always a period of time when they have to do without them until the next harvest has been brought in and is sufficiently dried. This is the reason that in the Ntum and Fang regions at these times the price for a "plate" (2)

[804]

2. The flat plate-shaped baskets called bush plates are a unit of measurement.

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805 ORDERING OF TIME--sense of time; conception of a minimal unit of time (e.g., a moment); divisions of the day and night (e.g., hours); divisions of the year (e.g., weeks, months, seasons); longer time spans; solar, lunar, and stellar reckoning of time; methods of dating; calendar and calendrical knowledge; use of aids to measure the passage of time (e.g., sundials, clocks); etc. See also:

Annual cycle of economic activities 331
Clocks and watches 688
Routine activities of a typical day 813
Holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries 907
Age levels and age terms 961
Ceremonial calendar 796
Conception of time 888

524 "star," "sun," and was later carried over for people and used as a /Fig. 55 appears here in the original text/ personal name, and kót – bent; we would perhaps say: "Your Excellency Von Bent."

244 I now turn to the second part of the cultivated plants, those that are cultivated in gardens, that is, in small operations and for the most part behind or close to the dwelling. To be sure, the difference between field and garden cultivation is not everywhere sharply defined. For instance, the garden plant taro is often planted at a distance from the village in fields, and plantains are frequently grown on cassava farms and other farms.

Taro, Colocasia antiquorum Schott (atú), and Macabo, Xanthosoma violaceum Schott (ekábe)

The taro or Colocasia is -- as the Latin name indicates -- a cultivated plant of some antiquity even for the Pangwe; hence [177] they have no ready explanation for the name atú. The macabo, on the other hand, which stems from /101/ America, has only recently been introduced and, according to the natives, was

[249]

Fig. 55. Sugar Cane Shoot.

taken over by the coastal peoples about thirty years ago (1);

●[805]

> 1. As soon as one has become familiar with the Negroes' ability to estimate time, one becomes very cautious with respect to the preciseness of historical dates.

hence its name ekábe from a káb-an, "to hand over, to divide, to take possession of." Both plants belong to the Araceae family. Taro is distinguished from macabo by the fact that its leaves are

821 subject to constant alteration, and this is explained /202/ in the following way. The masses of the sky's crust move against each other in a manner similar to iron or brass that has been liquified in forging and moves more or less viscously as it cools down, so that in the case of the first metal that flows out, its more rapid cooling impedes the movement, while the subsequent metal, flowing over the first, moves more quickly the nearer to the surface it is. This is why the clouds move at different speeds and in various layers relative to each other.

The moon and the sun pass across the vault of the sky exactly as the primeval force has ordained in eternal laws. During the day the sun moves under the vault from east to west, and during the night it moves back the same way over the vault where it is, of course, invisible. At night, the moon follows the course of the sun under the vault, and during the day it returns over the vault, but closer to the ceiling, so that during the day one can frequently see it shimmering through. The Pangwe very easily account for the phases of the moon. They assume that in its various phases the moon moves in one of the inner layers whose clods have already become more rigid and that it remains covered by one of these clods.

821 805 In our account of the religion of the Pangwe /Ed., not translated/, we have already discussed the significance of the moon in the cults. Here we need to consider only the practical side of its relation to human activities. The moon is the lord of fertility and of the seasons; the days and months are reckoned by it. The first day (according to other informants, the first two days) when the new moon appears is called avɔ̀ŋ ngɔ̀n, that is, cold moon. From this day on all impulses toward propagation are "put in cold storage" for seven days, all development and all fertility are interrupted, the women have their menstrual flow, and the men abstain from sexual intercourse. For this reason, nothing else is undertaken, not because a taboo exists, but because one would not have any luck. The man does not go out to clear his farm because he would cut his finger; the woman does not go out to plant because the plants would not flourish. Even hunting and fishing are not attempted. It is important to note that this day is by no means designated as "bad," but as a day of rest which might correspond to

821 our Sunday, as if all nature had to take a rest.

● 805 By way of contrast, the days around the full moon are no good for hunting, probably because the moon when it is full is especially "evil" and hateful to all those who are sinless -- as are animals, for instance. Even the festivals of the moon cult (Sso) are never celebrated at the full moon, but always towards the time of the new moon in order not to display evil in its most glaring form. The natives count nine "days of the full moon," the sacred number which we have already encountered in the cults /203/, and during this time the Pangwe speaks of the ndzĭbe ngōn, that is, the closed (full) moon, or ndzĭge ngōn or abŭm e ngōn, that is, the used moon. On these days the people do work, but fishing, trapping, and hunting drives are not practiced. Among the Fang, a direct taboo (ekĭ) exists for these three activities, though it is true that they like to circumvent this taboo -- like many others -- with the help of medicines.

Rules are made to be circumvented, the Ntum in Bebai thought, [789] and during the days of the full moon they very gaily held great hunting drives. They also made a medicine by cutting a circle -- the full moon -- into the bark of a tree and within the circle removing half of the bark. In this way it became a half moon (Fig. 64). This medicine is delightfully naïve and beautifully indicates how the Negro knows how to help himself in all situations.

821 Concerning the nature of the stars the "Pangwe scholars" are not yet quite agreed. Some believe the stars are simply holes in the vault of the sky through which the sun can be seen at night as it moves over the arch. Others say that they are little fires which during the day are simply outshone by the brightness of the sun. Still others -- and these are probably in the majority -- assume that the stars are little celestial bodies like the sun and the moon, but that they are afraid of the sun, so during the day they withdraw into the interior of the vault, and during the night, fleeing from the sun as it moves across the top of the arch, they come out and then become visible, hence their name o-tĭ'-tĕ-ĭ, from the root a tĕ = to move from one's place (1). If one of the stars has ventured too

1. oa tĕ, odĕn = when did you leave (travel from) home?

4. Time Reckoning

105 The Negro is happy-go-lucky and does not bother about "time." Time plays no role at all in Africa; indeed, the Negro regards it almost as an insult when a White hurries him because "he has no time." After all, there is lots of time. It is due to this contempt, also, that the Negroes never know how old they are, or rather, that they never find it necessary to remember. The same fact serves to explain their inability to combine numbers into conceptions and logical conclusions, even though they have a good [107] grasp of numbers up to 10,000, and beyond that with some difficulty.

The Pangwe possess no designation for the time segment corresponding to our solar year. Instead, they reckon according to mémbú. Each mbú (which should be translated roughly as a half year) comprises two of the four seasons that are established for the Pangwe region (see Section 1, p. 2 /Ed., this section of Vol. I is not translated/). To one of our years, therefore, there are two Pangwe "years," or, as the natives who have come in contact with Europeans express it, mémbú ménúte mebót, "years of the Blacks."

One mbú includes the great dry season and the brief rainy season and is called esób, from a zób (okód), "to sharpen (a knife)," because knives are sharpened at this time to clear the farms; in other words, it might be called the farming season or sowing season. The second mbú includes the short dry season and the great rainy season and is called ojún, from a jún, "to mourn, to wail," in other words, the fasting season; it corresponds very well to our winter, which is likewise a time during which nature sleeps and people starve. The Pangwe explain the name by saying that at the beginning of the rainy season all "food" is planted, and therefore food becomes scarce, but perhaps the expression arose in former habitations when the rainy season brought with it special misfortune, such as floods.

The correspondence of the seasons of the year among the Pangwe to the divisions of our solar year is, accordingly, as follows.

First half year (mbí)

805 esɔ̌b = farming season (summer), from December to May, consisting of:

1. yɔ̌ɛ'n esɔ̌b = great dry season (December to February);
2. kɔ̌gɔ̌, esɔ̌b = short rainy season (March to May). /206/

Second half year (mbɔ́)

ofɔ̌n = rainy season (winter) from June to November, consisting of:

1. yɔ̌ɛ'n ofɔ̌n = short dry season (June to August);
2. kɔ̌gɔ̌, ofɔ̌n = great rainy season (September to November).

A division of the half years into months is unknown to the Pangwe; he only knows the time span of the individual month (ngɔ̌'n, "moon"), and he has great difficulty in understanding that about six to seven of his months correspond to the Whites' half year and about 12 to 13 of his months correspond to the Whites' year.

To divide the month into weeks is something that the Pangwe [177] has learned from the Whites and has wholeheartedly adopted on account of the four Sundays (sɔ̌nɔ̌ III). He himself has marked off the first one to two days after the new moon as days of leisure, as has already been mentioned. [64] He also observes the first seven days of the month as something special, since the menstrual flow of the women supposedly lasts for seven days, but these days do not constitute a special segment of the month designated by a name of its own (1). Nor is there any such time segment in the rest of

[539] 1. It is merely said, for instance:
ayɔ̌ɔ́ ngɔ̌'n a sɔ́ malɛ́ malɛ́ or alɔngbɛ́
Cold moon, it came days three or seven.

the month.

We have the same picture with the day as we do with the month. Here, too, only the beginning is sharply defined, while

[105] the remainder follows as a matter of course. A day of 24 hours is called alũ' mbok (Ntum), "day one," and it falls into day = mɔ̃' IV, and night = alũ'. The day begins with the morning, kĩ'dĩ IV or kĩ'kĩ'dĩ, lasting from six o'clock (sunrise) until seven o'clock, in other words, one hour, and it continues until ngũ̃ IV, ngũngũ̃ IV, "evening," that is, until the time around sundown (six o'clock). In between, the Pangwe have as the designation of an hour only "time when the first women come from the plantations," that is, at 11 o'clock. The night is not divided up into definite segments. If they want to specify an hour of the night, for instance, for marching upon an enemy village, they make shift with the expression: "with the first call of the coucal," [125] Centropus monachus Rüpp. (dũgũ' III), that is, at 11 o'clock, just as we might say, "with the first cock crow." This same time is also called zã'ĩ alũ', "midnight." In case of a departure before sunrise, the natives may speak of a "time when the first ogbwã' (Francolinus squamatus Cass.) calls," that is, around five o'clock in the morning. Time designations by indicating the position of the sun with the hand -- which in regions where the sun rises and sets at approximately the same time throughout the entire year would be both easy and convenient -- are not known, and indeed, they are not even understood. /Plate 26 faces p. 206./

Weapons and Warfare

Flintlock musket. -- Containers for the charge and powder. -- Spears. -- Sword and battle-ax. -- Shields. -- Love of war. -- Night attacks, chevaux-de-frise, pitfalls, spiked branches. -- Women and children in war. -- Fortifications. -- Manner of conducting war (example). -- Prisoners of war.

/1/

Chapter 1

Geographical Location and Climate

131 The Pahouin country covers about 180, 000 square kilometers, from the middle Sanaga (4° 30' N) to the mouth of the Ogooué (1° 20' S) in latitude, from the Atlantic (9° 30' E) to the middle Sanga (14° E) in longitude. The inhabitants are politically under the jurisdiction of the Cameroons, Spanish Guinea, and French Equatorial Africa (Gabon and Middle Congo).

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133 The country appears essentially as a plateau of rocks, crystalline in the north, metamorphic in the south, with somewhat worn, intrusive domes, separated from the sea by a worn mountain range of rarely more than 1, 000 meters cut by the gorges of coastal rivers. The mean altitude varies from 500 to 700 meters up to the deep fault of the lower Ogooué Valley.

The watershed between the Congo and the coastal river basins bends toward the southeast from the Nkolomendim (the mountain-of-the-waters) massif in the Sangmélima subdivision. The principal tributary of the Congo, by way of the Sanga, is the Dja (N'Goko). The principal coastal rivers are the Sanaga and the Nyong, the N'Tem (Campo), the Muni, and the Ogooué.

132 The climate is of the humid equatorial type, modified by the altitude and characterized by a double alternation of dry and rainy seasons. The time measure of the Pahouin is the mbu, about six lunar cycles (ngon), and the solar year is divided as follows: (1)

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1. The dates are approximately valid for the Cameroons-Gabon border. The terms are in Boulou; in Fang they would be: oyum, sugha, or sughé.

mid-June to mid-December: Byôn (little dry season) and su'u (great rainy season)

mid-December to mid-June: ésep (great dry season) sometimes characterized by bikone (small rains)

Mean temperatures and rainfall are indicated on the table on page 3.